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# Forest County Potawatomi Community

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Executive Council  
Harold "Gus" Frank, Chair  
Al Milham, Vice Chair  
Lorna Shawano, Secretary  
John Alloway, Treasurer  
Ora Monegar, Council member  
Dean Pauliot, Council member

Location: Forest and Milwaukee Counties, Wisconsin

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# Forest County Potawatomi

## Tribal Statistics

There are roughly 1,250 FC Potawatomi tribal members.

The Potawatomi Reservation, located primarily in Forest County, totals 12,000 acres.

- 9,000 acres are trust land
- 3,000 acres are fee land
- There are also seven acres of trust land in the City of Milwaukee
- Approximately 531 tribal members live on reservation, trust, or fee land (Source: *US Census Bureau*)
- Additionally, large numbers of tribal members live in the Milwaukee area

The Potawatomi are the largest employer in Forest County. Approximately 700 of the Tribe's 2,700 employees work in Forest County. (Source: *Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development*)

## Tribal Government

The Potawatomi are governed by a General Council and an Executive Council.

- The General Council meets four times per year.
  - Made up of all eligible voting tribal members
  - Elects the Executive Council
  - Creates ordinances, adopts resolutions, employs legal counsel, manages property, etc.
- Executive Council meets monthly.
  - Includes chair, vice-chair, secretary, treasurer and two council members
  - Consults and negotiates with federal, state and local governments and corporations; manages financial affairs, etc.
  - All Executive Council actions are subject to review and approval by the General Council
  - Decisions are made by a majority rule
  - Elections are held in June of odd numbered years. Each term is four years. The terms are staggered.

## Brief History

The Potawatomi are Algonquin, a European term based upon linguistics, and Neshnabek, a Potawatomi word that means "original people." The Potawatomi were part of a confederacy with the Ojibwa (Chippewa) and Odawa (Ottawa) Indian tribes. This group was known as the Council of the Three Fires.

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At the time of first contact by the Europeans, the Potawatomi people were living in what is today lower Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin. To the west of Lake Michigan, the Potawatomi land base extended from Illinois to Green Bay, Wisconsin.

The Potawatomi signed 42 treaties with the United States government which is more than any other tribe. Below is a summary of the most notable treaties as well as other historical events:

- In 1795, the first of many treaties which took Potawatomi lands, was signed in Ohio.
- In 1830, the Indian Removal Act passed under President Jackson. This act forced all Indians living east of the Mississippi River to move to Indian Territory in the west.
- In 1833, the Potawatomi lost all of their land east of the Mississippi River in the Treaty of Chicago. This treaty took 5,000,000 acres of Potawatomi land.
- During this period, the U.S. military rounded up many of the Potawatomi and forcibly removed them from traditional lands. These Potawatomi people eventually settled in Kansas and Oklahoma.
- Groups of Potawatomi refused removal and fled into Wisconsin, Michigan, and Canada.
- Around 1880, a group of Potawatomi settled in an area near Blackwell and Wabeno in Forest County. This group was the origin of the Forest County Potawatomi Community.
- In 1913, the Forest County Potawatomi Community was officially recognized and made its initial land purchases to establish a reservation.
- In 1937, the Forest County Potawatomi Community formally adopted a new form of government. A constitution and bylaws were adopted that provided for a tribal chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, treasurer, and two councilmen.
- In 1982, a second Forest County Potawatomi constitution and bylaws were signed, which superseded the original 1937 constitution.
- In 1988, the National Indian Gaming Regulatory Act was approved. This act allowed for the operation of gaming by Indian tribes on Indian lands.
- In 1991, the Forest County Potawatomi Community opened Potawatomi Bingo in Milwaukee.

## Tribal Services

### Law Enforcement

- The Potawatomi do not have a law enforcement office.
- Funded primarily with tribal funds, some discretionary federal grants and Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance funds

### Court System

- The Potawatomi have an independent Tribal Court.
- Cases include: Indian child welfare, adoptions, trancies, name changes, and limited small claims cases.

### Education

- Potawatomi youth are educated in two primary school districts: Crandon and Wabeno.
- In the Crandon School District, there are 317 Native American students representing 31% of the student body.\*\*
- In the Wabeno School District, there are 132 Native American students representing 21.8% of the student body.\*\*

*\*\*Please note that these figures are total Native American student enrollment in these school districts, not exclusively Potawatomi students. (Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction)*

## Healthcare

- The Health and Wellness Center in Crandon provides: routine medical care, radiology, community health, pharmacy, dentistry, optical, speech therapy, massage therapy, physical therapy, smoking cessation, diabetes treatment, chiropractic, maternal health, and behavioral health services.
- Funded by Potawatomi, with some funds coming from the Indian Health Service and the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services
- These services are open to all residents of Greater Forest County. It is estimated that 60% of the services provided are to non-Native Americans.

## Social Services

- The Potawatomi provide the following social services: Head Start, youth counselors, tutoring programs, prenatal/postnatal programs, Choices Youth program, domestic violence program, elder advocate program, Community Cares, day care, family services programs.
- Funded through a variety of tribal, state and federal monies.

## Economic Enterprises

- Potawatomi employs approximately 2,700 people
- There are 800 employees in Forest County.
  - 60% of those are non-native, 40% are Native American
- Milwaukee County (1,900 employees)
  - 91% are non-native, 9% are Native American

<u>Business</u>	<u>Type of Business</u>
Potawatomi Bingo & Casino Milwaukee, WI	Gaming
Northern Lights Casino Carter, WI	Gaming
Potawatomi Red Deer Ranch Laona, WI	Deer farm
Potawatomi Traveling Times Wabeno, WI	Newspaper
Indian Springs Lodge Carter, WI	Hotel and conference center
Potawatomi Convenience Store Wabeno, WI	Gas station
Potawatomi Business Development Corporation Brookfield, WI	Capital investment, real estate